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**Cornelius, by the Grace of God and favour of the
Apostolic See, Archbishop of Halifax:**

**To the Clergy, Religious Orders and Laity of the
Diocese: Health and Benediction in the Lord.**

DEARLY BELOVED:

We are nearing the close of a century which may well be called an era of mechanical and material progress. The grand principles of knowledge which great minds in other ages of more profound research discovered and taught for the development of man's intellectual faculties, have been adapted and applied to minister to his material comforts. It is in this deftness in the adaptation of knowledge, not in its discovery, that our age is preeminent. Hence its progress has been material, rather than intellectual. Changes important in themselves, and far-reaching in their effects, have taken place in the social and political orders during the present century. Old-time customs and methods have been discarded, and new standards of action have been introduced, new axioms in business and in government are heard in busy marts, and in legislative halls. The recognition of an overruling providence in human affairs, when not openly sneered at, is politely discouraged. The words of the Psalmist: "In the beginning, O Lord, thou foundest the earth; and the heavens are the work of thy hands," (Psl. ci-26) are taken as a poetic figure of speech, not as the enunciation of a fact demonstrable by reason. With all our advantages it is

painfully evident that the sense of the supernatural is less keen than in past ages. There is a ceaseless warfare between the spirit and the flesh, as St. Paul points out. (Gal. v. 17.) "For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh : for these are contrary one to another ; so that you do not the things that you would." If we cling to natural and material comforts, our spiritual sense will be gradually deadened, and we will cease to look behind the veil of earthly things to the great Maker of all.

It is scarcely necessary to say that superstition is undesirable ; yet, it is surely preferable to, and more rational than, scepticism. Even at the worst it is but an excrescence on Faith, and can be readily amputated ; but scepticism betokens an absence of Faith, as well as a mental malady. Moreover, many things are lightly and thoughtlessly labelled superstition which in truth are evidences of an enlightened knowledge of God's power, and of a keen realization of His intimate relation to His creatures. The man who earnestly believes that God governs by his providence what he has created by his power, cannot admit that chance, or blind fate, has any part or place in the general scheme of creation. True, the will of man has been left free ; good and evil are before it, and it may choose whichever it will. Life and death are within its reach, and it may elect the one and reject the other. Thus will man freely work out his individual destiny, aided, if he so will, by God's grace to tread the path of duty, but never forced from evil ways, should he decide to follow them. Yet there is a divine overshadowing of all lives which so moulds and fashions events as to secure the final end of creation, despite the perverse use often made of free will, and the shipwreck of in-

dividual souls. Man may deprive himself of eternal happiness, but he cannot rob God of everlasting glory; he may break the laws of justice and morality, but he cannot escape the "just judgment." This is true of Nations as well as of individuals. The man of Faith, the man to whom God is a reality, and not an empty name, recognizes the hand of the Omnipotent not only in the creation of the universe, but also in the events which shape the lives of men and Nations. He believes with the Psalmist: "Great is our Lord, and great is his power, and of his wisdom there is no number. The Lord lifteth up the meek; and bringeth the wicked down even to the ground." (Psl. CXLVI, 5, 6.) Right reason, too, as well as Revelation, is on the side of the man who believes in God's governing care over his creatures, and his overruling power by which he causes the free acts of man to conspire to the intended end.

"All things were made by him; and without him was made nothing that was made" (John 1-3), is the expression of a truth which no theory of Cosmogony can destroy. In no previous age, perhaps, was such a general and systematic attack made on the Supernatural as in our own. Matter and its properties were held to be sufficient to explain not only the existence of the world, but also of man, his ethical sense, and his intellectual faculties. The collapse of this attack is now almost complete. Here and there a belated gatherer-up of the husks of bankrupt teaching, or a callow youth eager to attract notice, or a sciolist consumed with the desire of posing as a "man of science," constitute its champions. Reason proves the necessity of a first self-existent Cause, the Creator of matter and force; an intelligent first Cause that planned and worked out, through secondary causes, the wonderful order of the universe, created

the souls of men and prefixed to them an end worthy of his own greatness, and of their dignity. Reason, also, proves that created objects exist simply because the Creator willed their existence; and they possess such qualities as it pleased him to bestow.

The human mind being limited in its capacity, should recognize that innumerable truths must be beyond its ken; that the causes of many effects must be frequently unknown, or only partially understood; that the entire plan of action, the relation of parts to the whole scheme and end of creation, cannot be fully grasped in our present state. Despite our most profound research we shall live in an atmosphere of mysteries, knowing a few facts clearly, having considerable knowledge of many others, but seeing innumerable others only darkly and as in a glass.

On all sides the thoughtful man will find evidences of the action and disposition of an Almighty power, and of an infinite wisdom, whether he considers the fruitfulness and seasons of the earth, the order and regularity of the planets, or the history and vicissitudes of the human race. He will find that whilst to the eyes of the flesh only material objects and the action of natural forces are presented, the supernatural encompasses him round about, and is more in evidence to the intelligence than the natural. In fact, it alone can give an adequate explanation of, or reason for, the simplest experiences of our daily lives. It so permeates the world, and is such a constant factor in its government, that we look upon it as purely natural. A perpetual miracle is before our eyes, yet we recognize it not. The multiplication of the loaves and fishes is being continually repeated in our harvests, and it excites no wonder. Was it really any greater exhibition of power, and of command over the elements of nature, to feed five thou-

sand with a few loaves, than to feed many millions from some grains of wheat? Yet, because of the former the people sought to make our Lord king, whilst for the latter very many are not even thankful. It will, of course, be said the harvest is the product of the soil and the fruit of man's labour. It is quite true the soil and man's labour concur as secondary causes in multiplying the seed, but the primary cause, the real giver of the increase, is the same God who multiplied the loaves, though working through another agency. It is a more signal evidence of power to produce a like effect mediately than immediately. What we call the natural order is really the mystery and miracle, rather than those extraordinary manifestations of the Creator's action which are called by that name. No miracle destroys, or suspends, or contradicts any natural law, although its effect is infinitely superior to theirs. The intelligence of God, although infinitely superior to ours, does not derogate from it, neither does his infinite power run counter to the finite. Hence not only are miracles possible, they are, viewing the present order of things, to be expected. The only question to be investigated regarding an alleged miraculous event is the same as that regarding an unusual natural one, viz., the evidence on which it rests. The one real difference between the two is that in the former we are vouchsafed a glimpse of God's direct action, whilst in the latter we only see that action indirectly.

The conduct of man and the ordering of his life, is evidently a higher and more noble object than the order of the physical universe. Therefore the action of the Creator should be more apparent in its regulation. But man being rational and endowed with free will, the nature of God's intervention is directive, not compelling. A law of right and wrong

is innate in his soul ; it was confirmed and expanded on Mount Sinai, received its completion and perfection by the teaching of Christ, and its preservation and promulgation were assured for all time by the establishment of the Church. This last is an embodied miracle and a standing witness to God's intervention to regulate the conduct of man in a manner consonant with his nature. It has a mission to teach, with guaranteed authority, truths of the supernatural order, and to dispense the rich treasures of divine grace. The fruits of the earth may fail, the granary of the Empire may be empty, famine may consume the people ; but the bread of life ever abounds in the Church ; her storehouse is never exhausted ; and spiritual starvation can never afflict her obedient children. She teaches truths difficult of understanding, and hard to the proud of intellect ; yea, trying even to the humble ; but does she not supply invincible motives of credibility ? Is not her own rise, and spread, and continued existence as difficult of explanation as any of her dogmas ? Only in God can be found the reason for the one, or the other. Thus whilst her history bears irrefragable testimony to her divine institution and guidance, it confirms likewise the truth of her message. When our Lord's words were disbelieved by the crowd, he pointed to his works and said : "For the works which the Father hath given me to perfect ; the works themselves which I do, give testimony of me, that the Father hath sent me." (John v-36) So the Church, when her teaching is contested, can refer men to the story of her career. For nineteen hundred years she has been the nursery, the school, the hospital, the almshouse of souls, generating children to God, instructing them in his commandments, healing their spiritual wounds by her ministry, and nourishing them

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unto eternal life by her Sacraments. For which of these works is she to be stoned? On account of which of these shall the divinity of her mission be assailed? And if, like her Founder's, her mission be divine, divine too, like his, must be her message, whether we fully understand it or not. By what law of logic, or ethics, are we to reject all conclusions which we are unable to reason out? Being convinced of the divine mission of the Church, we are most logical in accepting her teachings. As the most bald statement of a fact is a truth, its acceptance is commanded by ethical law, or intellectual honesty. The dignity of our intelligence is best consulted, and its perfection promoted, by assenting to what we know must be a true conclusion, and by holding it firmly. Faith, therefore, simple, childlike Faith, by which one unhesitatingly accepts, and undoubtedly holds revealed truths, is the most reasonable and ennobling intellectual act. It is quite permissible to reverently seek a fuller knowledge, both of their inter-relation, and their harmony with truths of the natural order. But we should always bear in mind, that owing to the limitation of our intelligence, it is impossible, in our present state, to solve all difficulties. Right reason can demonstrate this; consequently, it proclaims that we must rest content with the full knowledge we have of certain broad facts, until freed from the bonds of the flesh, we can contemplate creation from the inside. Then will all God's ways be vindicated and the immensity of his unceasing love for us be made manifest. In the meantime he asks us to trust him; to give him the homage of our intelligence and our free will, by believing his teachings, and observing his commandments. One of his commands is "to hear the Church;" to accept her doctrine as his own—"who hears you hears me," is our Lord's own testimony to the divine

authority of his Church. The right of the Church to teach with binding authority may be disregarded, it cannot be confuted. The Church may be derided, she cannot be ignored; she may be persecuted; but she cannot be conquered. Weak children may give scandal; vain worldly children may forget her teachings; false children, in the pride of intellect, may seek to minimize or explain away her dogmas,—all this has happened in every age,—yet she, more unchanging than any natural law and more untiring, keeps on her way, exhorting, reproving, rebuking; a stumbling-block, indeed, to the self-sufficient and worldly wise, but life and resurrection to men of “good will.”

Not only is the Church a witness to God's intervention in the moral order, and a continual reminder of his loving care for our souls, she is also set as a testimony against the overweening pride of material strength. No kingdom is so widespread as she; none has lived her years, or equalled her achievements, or surpassed her conquests. She has seen, and will see again, mighty empires that rejoiced and confided in horsemen, and chariots, and armed battalions, shattered and destroyed, whilst she, deprived of all these, and confiding in the strength of the Lord, has gone on, and will go on, conquering and to conquer. Whether men realize it or not, she is a living testimony to the truth that mere brute force, mere superiority of numbers, in men, and ships, and guns, and money, cannot avert national disaster, or ensure the perpetuity of a nation. The world has not been given over to the rule of the strongest; they may triumph for a time, but defeat inevitably overtakes them. All through the history of mankind can be traced the decadence and overthrow, in God's own time, of material strength.

On you, Dearly Beloved, to whom it “has been

given to know the kingdom of God," to whom has been given through Faith an understanding and intelligence of many mysteries, rests a responsibility proportionate to your knowledge. If you are singularly blessed in the calm assurance of your Faith, and enabled to appreciate at its true value that which is merely natural; if for you the Supernatural enters into, and gives tone and purpose to, your daily actions, you should be mindful of those who are buffeted by every wind, and borne about by every wave of false teaching. Help them by your prayers, help them by your example. Think of your noble heritage as children of the Church, and let supernatural motives mould your lives, and regulate your external as well as internal conduct. Thus will your "light shine before men," and help to dispel some at least of the surrounding darkness. You are of the Church through which mankind is to be taught and sanctified in this age, and in future ones, as it was in those long past. Never forget this. Hence you are to set the example of right living and correct belief, not to take it from others. This has been proclaimed a Holy Year by the Sovereign Pontiff. Let each of you endeavour to make it such, so that the coming century may begin under happy auspices, and God's kingdom on earth be established in the hearts of all. During the Lenten season, remember the purposes of its institution, and enter into yourselves by recollection, fervent prayer, and works of mortification. Deny yourselves some lawful pleasure to strengthen your will; for be assured, the one who never denies oneself occasionally in lawful things will soon indulge in unlawful ones. This of itself is sufficient answer to that class of amateur moralists who seek to decry the Lenten season.

We confide in your pastoral zeal, dear Brethern

of the Clergy, to seek out and bring back to repentance the erring who have strayed into "hard paths," into the ways of death. Whilst thus acting the part of the Good Shepherd you will also be helping to make this a Holy Year.

The Regulations for Lent are the same as last year.

This Pastoral shall be read in every Church of the Diocese on the first Sunday after its reception that the Pastor shall officiate therein.

The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you all, dear Brethern.

✠ C. O'BRIEN,
Archbishop of Halifax.

HALIFAX, FEB. 24TH, 1900.

C. A. CAMPBELL,
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